

Metropolitan Tabernacle Church v. City of Chattanooga

Complaint Exhibit 7:

Mayor's Facebook Statement

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April 9 at 3:30 PM ·

This Sunday is Easter, which is one of the most important religious holidays of the year for many people in our region. Our recent executive orders related to the coronavirus strictly prohibit large gatherings of any kind, and this, unfortunately, includes worship services. This is another deeply sad decision that I have had to confront in the last several weeks: the very things that give us so much joy and life – community and fellowship, particularly through worship – are the very things we must avoid now in order to stop the spread of the coronavirus. This disease is serious – and so our response has to be serious too.

This Easter Sunday, and every Sunday until the pandemic is behind us, if you can stay home, please stay home. We respectfully ask that churches in our area not move forward with "drive-in" worship services or any other kind of public assembly. Allowing people to gather, even in their cars with the windows rolled up, for any length of time will be considered a violation of our shelter-in-place directive.

Under the terms of our most recent executive order, you may drive-through a specific drop-off point at your church to make donations or pick-up food and other supplies. Person-to-person contact should be strictly limited, however. For instance, food or supplies should be placed in a car's trunk or backseat, not handed through a window. All congregants, church staff, and volunteers must wear face masks.

I know many of you will miss being with your church family this weekend and I hate asking you to forgo in-person worship and a lot of other beloved Easter traditions this year. Your health and safety matters more to me than anything else right now, though, and I know that this sentiment is shared by every minister, priest, and faith leader in our community. The toughest times bring out the best qualities in each of us, and if we all do our part, we'll get to the other side of this that much faster.

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